

01 The present simple

The present simple is used to **make** simple statements of fact, **to** talk about things that happen **repeatedly**, **and** to describe things that are **always true**.

See also:

Present continuous **4** Present for future events **19** Adverbs of frequency **102**

1.1 THE PRESENT SIMPLE

To make the present simple of most **verbs**, use the base form (the infinitive without "to").

I **eat** lunch at noon every day.

The base form of the verb "to eat."

Adverbs of frequency are often used with the present simple.



She **eats** lunch at 2pm every day.

With "he," "she," and "it," add "-s" to the base form.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

We **drink** coffee every morning.



She **drinks** coffee every morning.



We **start** work at 9am.



He **starts** work at 11am.



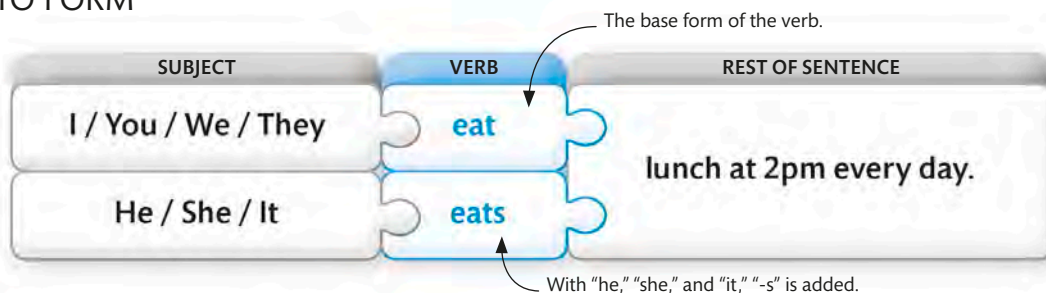
They **leave** work at 5pm.



Rob **leaves** work at 7pm.



HOW TO FORM



1.2 "-S" AND "-ES" ENDINGS

With some verbs, "-es" is added for "he," "she," and "it."

These include verbs ending with "-sh," "-ch," "-o," "-ss," "-x," and "-z."

I **go** to bed.

He **goes** to bed.

"-es" is added to verbs ending with "-o."

I **finish** work.

He **finishes** work.

"-es" is added to verbs ending with "-sh."

I **watch** TV.

She **watches** TV.

"-es" is added to verbs ending with "-ch."

I **cross** the road.

She **crosses** the road.

"-es" is added to verbs ending with "-ss."

I **fix** cars.

She **fixes** cars.

"-es" is added to verbs ending with "-x."

Their phones **buzz** all day.

His phone **buzzes** all day.

"-es" is added to verbs ending with "-z."

FURTHER EXAMPLES

Tom **does** the dishes every evening.



He **washes** the windows on Fridays.



She **teaches** English to six students.



He **blushes** when he's embarrassed.



COMMON MISTAKES FORMING THE PRESENT SIMPLE

When the present simple is used with "he," "she," "it," or one person's name, it always ends in "-s" or "-es."

An "s" is added to the base form "start."

He **starts** work at 11am. ✓

He **start** work at 11am. ✗

"Start" without an "s" is only used for "I," "you," "we," and "they."

There is no need to add the auxiliary verb "do" when forming the present simple. It is only used to **form questions and negatives**.

I **eat** lunch at noon every day. ✓

I **do eat** lunch at noon every day. ✗

"Do" is only used as an auxiliary verb when forming negatives or questions.

1.3 "BE" IN THE PRESENT SIMPLE

"Be" is an important verb with an irregular present simple form.



I am 25 years old.



You are a chef.



He is happy.

"Are" also follows
"we" and "they."

"Is" also follows
"she" and "it."

HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT	"BE"	REST OF SENTENCE
I	am	happy.
You	are	
He / She / It	is	
We / They	are	

FURTHER EXAMPLES

I am a doctor.



We're late for work.

Contractions can
also be used.



They are students.



He's American.



My grandma is 92 years old.



Ruby's seven years old.



1.4 "HAVE" IN THE PRESENT SIMPLE

"Have" is an irregular verb. The third person singular form is "has" not "haves."

I have a garage.



"Has" is used for the third person singular: "he," "she," and "it."

She has a yard.



HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT	"HAVE"	OBJECT
I You We They	have	a garage.
He She It	has	

FURTHER EXAMPLES

I have a car.



The cat has a new collar.



You have a sister.



He has a cold.



I have a painful back.



Thomas has a driving lesson today.



They have the same dress.



Jack has a bad headache.



They have a new baby.



Sarah has coffee with Tom every Tuesday.



02 The present simple negative

To make negative sentences using "be" in the present simple, "not" is added after the verb. For other verbs, the auxiliary verb "do not" or "does not" is used.

See also:

Present simple 1 Present overview 5

Types of verbs 49

2.1 NEGATIVES WITH THE VERB "BE"

The verb "be" takes the same form in positive and negative sentences. The only difference is adding "not."

I am a farmer. **I am not** a doctor.



HOW TO FORM



2.2 NEGATIVE CONTRACTIONS

"Is not" and "are not" can be contracted in two ways. The subject and verb can be contracted, or the verb and "not." They mean the same thing.

You are not a doctor.
↓
"You are" becomes "you're."
You're not
You aren't } a doctor.
↑
"Are not" becomes "aren't."



FURTHER EXAMPLES

I'm not a teacher.

↑
"I amn't" is incorrect.

He's not
He isn't } a farmer.

They're not
They aren't } American.

2.3 NEGATIVES WITH OTHER VERBS IN THE PRESENT SIMPLE

For verbs other than "be," "do not" or "does not" goes before the verb to make the negative.

I **work** outside.

I **do not** **work** outside.



He **works** inside.

He **does not** **work** inside.



Verb in base form.

HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT	"DO / DOES" + "NOT"	BASE FORM	REST OF SENTENCE
I / You / We / They	do not	work	outside.
He / She / It	does not		

The base form is used no matter what the subject is.

FURTHER EXAMPLES



You **do not** **have** a computer.

We **don't** **start** work at 8am.



He **does not** **live** in Los Angeles.

He **doesn't** **have** a car.



This is the contracted form of "does not."



COMMON MISTAKES FORMING NEGATIVE SENTENCES

The main verb in a negative sentence always stays in its base form, even if the subject is "he," "she," or "it."

He **does not** **work** outside.



He does not **works** outside.



03 Present simple questions

Questions in the present simple with “be” are formed by swapping the verb and subject. For other verbs, the auxiliary verb “do” or “does” must be added before the subject.

See also:

Present simple 1 Forming questions 34

Question words 35 Open questions 36

3.1 QUESTIONS WITH “BE” IN THE PRESENT SIMPLE

To form questions in the present simple using “be,” reverse the order of the subject and the verb.

In a statement, the subject comes before the verb.
You are Canadian.

Are you Canadian?

In a question, the verb moves to the start of the sentence.

The subject comes after the verb.



HOW TO FORM

“BE”	SUBJECT	REST OF SENTENCE
Am	I	Canadian?
Is	he / she / it	
Are	you / we / they	

FURTHER EXAMPLES

Am I on time?



Is he your brother?



Where are we?



Am I on the list?



Is it time to leave?



Are they friendly?



Question words can be used before the verb to form open questions.

3.2 QUESTIONS WITH "DO" AND "DOES"

For questions with verbs other than "be," start the question with "do" or "does." Don't swap the subject and the main verb.

You work in an office.

Do you work in an office?

Add "do" to questions with "I," "you," "we," and "they."

She works in a school.

Does she work in a school?

Add "does" to questions with "he," "she," and "it."

The main verb goes in its base form.

HOW TO FORM

"DO / DOES"	SUBJECT	BASE FORM OF VERB	REST OF SENTENCE
Do	I / you / we / they	work	in an office?
Does	he / she / it		

The verb never takes an "-s" or "-es" when you ask a question.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

Do they live in Paris?



Do you usually finish work at 4pm?



Does Tom get up at 6am?



When does the party start?



Question words can be used before "do" or "does" to form open questions.



COMMON MISTAKES FORMING PRESENT SIMPLE QUESTIONS

Never add "-s" or "-es" to the base form of the verb when asking a question, even in the third person singular ("he," "she," or "it").

Does he finish work on time? ✓

The main verb always goes in its base form in questions.

Does he finishes work on time? ✗

Do not add "-s" or "-es" to the main verb when asking a question.

04 The present continuous

The present continuous is used to talk about continued actions that are happening in the present moment. It is formed with "be" and a present participle.

See also:

Present simple **1** Action and state verbs **50**

Infinitives and participles **51**

4.1 THE PRESENT CONTINUOUS

The present continuous is used to describe a current, continued action.

Julie usually wears jeans, but today **she is wearing** a dress.

The present continuous uses the verb "be."

This is the present continuous. It describes what is happening right now.

This is the present simple. It describes a repeated action or situation.



HOW TO FORM



Present participle

FURTHER EXAMPLES

We are walking the dog.



They're fighting with each other.



He is washing the dishes.



She's relaxing at the moment.



They are talking on their phones.

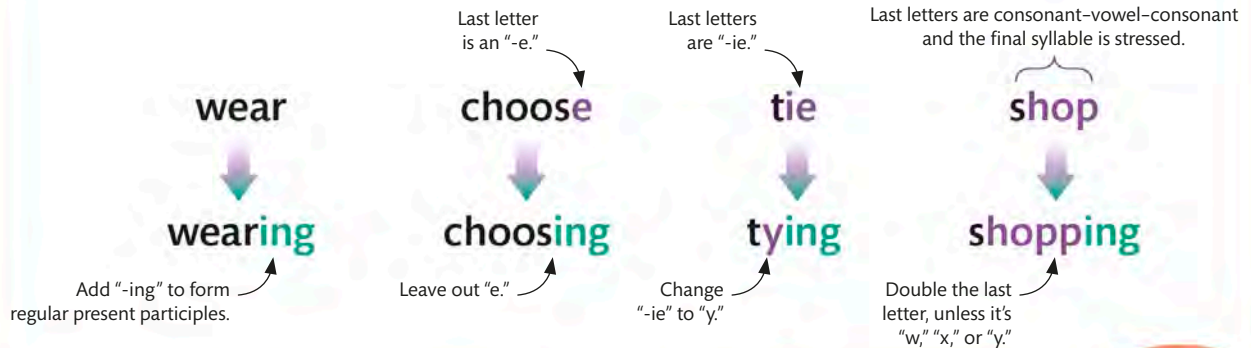


It's raining a lot outside.



4.2 PRESENT PARTICIPLE SPELLING RULES


The present participle is formed by adding “-ing” to the base form of the verb. Some participles have slightly different spelling rules.



TIP

Present participles follow the same spelling rules as gerunds.

FURTHER EXAMPLES



They’re **opening** a store next week.

Don’t double the last letter because the final syllable is not stressed.




My uncle is **writing** a novel.




Harry is always **lying** to his mother.



Terry is **mopping** the floor.



I am **cutting** some apples.



My mother is **baking** us a cake.

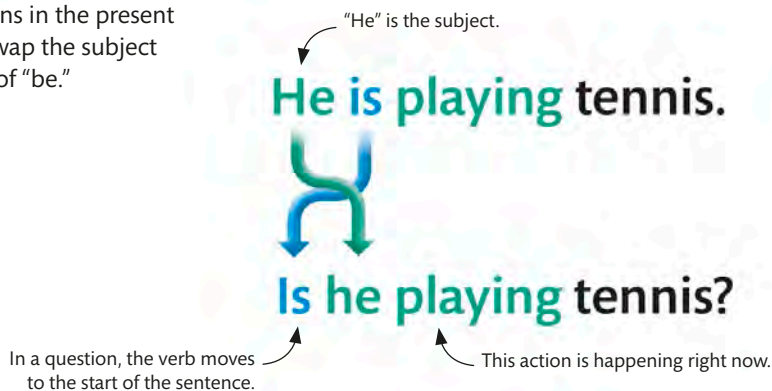
COMMON MISTAKES STATE VERBS IN CONTINUOUS TENSES

Action verbs can be used in simple and continuous forms.
State verbs are not usually used in continuous forms.

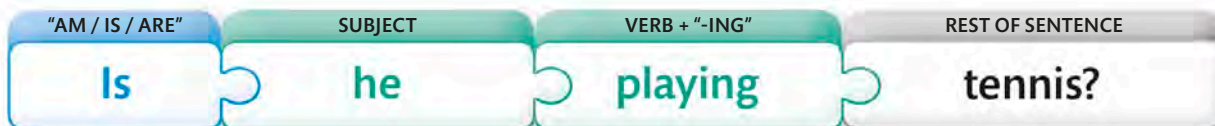
ACTION	STATE
 <p>I read every day. ✓</p> <p>I am reading right now. ✓</p>	 <p>I own two cars. ✓</p> <p>I am owning two cars. ✗</p>

4.3 QUESTIONS IN THE PRESENT CONTINUOUS

To ask questions in the present continuous, swap the subject and the form of "be."



HOW TO FORM



FURTHER EXAMPLES

Are they going to the park?



Is he cycling to work?



Is she eating pizza?



Are they working late?



Question words such as "what," "where," and "how" can be used before the verb to form open questions.

Where are we going today?



Are you coming to the party?



What are you eating for dinner?



Is it raining outside?



4.4 THE PRESENT CONTINUOUS NEGATIVE

To make the negative of the present continuous, add "not" after "be."

He is wearing a tie, but he **is not** wearing a hat.

Add "not" after "be" to make the negative. Contractions are also possible.

The present participle stays the same when you make the negative.



HOW TO FORM



The present participle doesn't change.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

He **isn't walking** the dog.



We **aren't taking** the bus today.



They **aren't singing** well today.



You **aren't doing** your job!



She **isn't cleaning** up her bedroom.



James **isn't reading** his book.



They **aren't looking** where they're going.



We **aren't eating** out this week.



He **isn't playing** football today.



You **aren't doing** well at school this year.



05 Present tenses overview

5.1 THE PRESENT SIMPLE AND THE PRESENT CONTINUOUS

The **present simple** is used to talk about permanent situations, regular occurrences, things that are always true, repeated actions, and ongoing states.

This is always true.
The sun **rises** in the East.



The **present continuous** is used to refer to temporary situations, repeated actions around the present moment, and ongoing actions in the present moment.

This is a temporary situation.
It **is raining** in San Francisco right now.



5.2 PRESENT TENSE QUESTIONS

Present simple questions with "be" are formed differently from other verbs.

Are you English?
The form of "be" comes before the subject.

Do you speak English?
"Do" or "does" is added before the subject.

Present continuous questions are always formed in the same way.

Is it raining?
The form of "be" comes before the subject.

COMMON MISTAKES USING "S" IN THE PRESENT SIMPLE

"-s" is never added to the base form of the verb when asking a **question** or making a **negative** sentence, even in the third person singular ("he," "she," or "it").



AFFIRMATIVE

An "-s" is added to the base form in affirmative sentences.

He **starts** work at 7am. ✓

He **start** work at 7am. ✗

The base form without an "-s" is only used for "I," "you," "we," and "they."

The present simple and present continuous are used in different situations. There are different ways to form questions and negatives with these tenses.

See also:

Present simple **1** Present continuous **4**

Forming questions **34** Infinitives and participles **51**

Giorgio **plays** golf every weekend.

This is a repeated action.



Robert **lives** in London.

This is a continuing state.



Julia **is playing** lots of golf these days.

This is a repeated action happening around the present moment.



At the moment, Robert **is watching** TV.

This is an ongoing action in the present moment.



5.3 PRESENT TENSE NEGATIVES

Present simple negatives with "be" are formed differently from other verbs.

I am **not** French.

"Not" is added after the form of "be."

I **do not** speak French.

"Do not" or "does not" is added between the subject and main verb.

Present continuous negatives are always formed in the same way.

It is **not** raining.

"Not" is added after the form of "be."

QUESTION

The verb always goes in its base form in questions.

Does he **finish** work on time? ✓

Does he **finishes** work on time? ✗

"-s" or "-es" are not added to the main verb when asking a question.

NEGATIVE

The base form is used in the negative.

He does not **work** weekends. ✓

He does not **works** weekends. ✗

"-s" or "-es" are not added to the main verb in negative sentences.

06 Imperatives

Imperatives are used to give commands or to make requests. They can also be used to give warnings or directions.

See also:

Types of verbs 49 Suggestions and advice 59

Indefinite pronouns 79

6.1 IMPERATIVES

Imperatives are formed using the base form of the verb (the infinitive without "to").

An exclamation mark is used if the imperative is urgent.

Stop!

The base form of the verb "to stop."

An illustration showing a purple car with three people inside, and a purple stick figure standing next to it with arms outstretched, as if signaling to stop.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

Get up.



Be careful!



Give that to me.



Eat your breakfast.



Help!



Read this book.



6.2 NEGATIVE IMPERATIVES

"Do not" or "don't" can be added before the verb to make an imperative negative.

Do not
Don't } turn right.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

Don't eat that cake.



I've just painted that door.

Don't touch it.



Don't rush. I'm not in a hurry.



Don't sit there. That chair is broken.



6.3 SUBJECTS WITH IMPERATIVES

An imperative sentence does not usually have a subject, but sometimes a noun or a pronoun is used to make it clear who is being talked to.

Everybody sit down.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

Phillip, come here.



You stay there.



For emphasis "you" can be used in an imperative clause.

Someone open the window.



Have fun, Anne.



The subject can also be placed at the end.

6.4 POLITE REQUESTS

Imperatives in English can be considered rude. Words can be added to make them more polite.

Please close the door.



"Please" can be placed before the imperative verb to make a request more polite.

Just give me a minute, please.



"Just" can go before the imperative.

"Please" can also be placed at the end of the sentence.

Do come in.



"Do" can go before the imperative verb to make a request more formal.

6.5 MAKING SUGGESTIONS WITH "LET'S"

"Let's" can be used to make a suggestion for an activity that includes the speaker.

It's sunny today. Let's go out.



Base form.

It's cold. Let's not go out.



"Not" goes after "let's" to form the negative.